



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY

Entered as second-class matter November 18, 1907, at the Post Office, New York, N. Y., under the Act of Congress of March 3, 1879

VOL I

NEW YORK, FEBRUARY 15, 1908

No 17

The article entitled Latin versus the Classics, the conclusion of which appears in the present issue of *The Classical Weekly*, contains the following query: "Why not take both Greek and Latin literatures, so far as we want them, in translation?"

This proposal has by no means the grace of novelty. A generation ago Mr. Philip Gilbert Hamerton wrote to the principal of a French college in this vein. Hamerton believed in exalting Latin at the expense of Greek. He held likewise that Latin should be taught by the natural method! But this is a digression. To return to the question there are, I dare say, few thoroughgoing partisans of the study of the Classics who have not been interrogated thus more than once in the past decade. Perchance in a faculty debate the question came as a stone hurled by some Polyphemus of the Practicalities at the cowering crew of Greeks. Anon it was some sceptic parent or recalcitrant student who sped the winged word. Seldom to my knowledge has the interrogator been "one of us".

The answer to the question must always be the same—because neither Greek literature nor Latin literature can be "taken" with effective results in any such dosage as the writer prescribes. Carpers should take to heart the example of Thomas Huxley, who found it necessary to learn Greek *in senectute* after the Catonian fashion in order to interpret to his own satisfaction a passage in Aristotle's History of Animals. Apparently Huxley's literary taste relished Greek at second-hand as little as his scientific spirit approved of it. At all events he utilized his new accomplishment in reading Homer through in the original. True appreciation of Greek literature—for Greek is the offensive eye that is to be plucked out—cannot be cultivated by persons ignorant of the Greek alphabet by dint of reading in translation "more of the masterpieces . . . than does the average classical Sophomore who has struggled through a small quantity of them in the original texts". It is not so exclusively a matter of progress in extent, of quantity, as the writer seems to imply. Knowledge of literature comes after total immersion in the Pierian Spring rather than from skipping from rock to rock and occasionally wetting one's feet. Our fathers read, comparatively speaking, few

books, but these were mostly worth while. The masterpieces were perused again and again. Their contents the "Gentle Reader" grappled to him. I fancy that in aptness in literary allusion, in facility and discrimination in expression, in all the perquisites that go with a knowledge of literature the *veteres* would not suffer greatly by comparison with the present *saeculum* of bookish folk whose reading covers a vastly wider range than was the case fifty years ago. In reading, concentration, not peregrination, aids acquisition.

Therefore, there is something to be said for the insight into Greek dramatics possessed by the undergraduate who has labored through two tragedies, and perhaps a comedy, in the original. People who know their Sophocles and their Euripides and their Aristophanes in the finished versions of Sir Richard Jebb, of Mr. Way, and of Mr. Rogers are placed under an everlasting disadvantage. They have perforce to pin their faith to what another has read out of the author. They must have recourse to a middle-mind. Competent though the mediating intelligence may be, in the process of transmission much is lost which direct contact between the mind of the reader and the mind of the author can secure, when, in other words, the reader interprets the author in terms of his own world.

Certainly the student is often aware of the fact that there is much in the original which he cannot reproduce, nay, can but dimly realize. The more mature he is the readier he will be to confess his impotency. But this very consciousness makes for comprehension of the essence of the original and hence marks a step toward appreciation of that which is unique in the way a Greek man thought and bodied forth his thought. This consciousness the reader of translations can never attain unto. Unless he is reading the version of a frank translator, he will be quite innocent of the fact that he is, as it were, examining the photograph of a great painting. In his copy objects and persons, i. e. externalities, are faithfully reproduced. Nuance and perspective are imperfectly represented.

But in time the writer himself seems to recant his doctrine. We need not search for a more effective plea for the study of Greek than that which was framed—we hope not inadvertently—by the two sentences quoted below (*italics and parenthe-*

sis are mine): "Certainly no other performance (than translation) can so make the student 'weigh every word' and while dealing with great men's ideas feel every detail of the expression". This is an admirable statement of the value that lies in intensive study of Greek literature *in the original*. Again: "The constant recasting of the thought . . . the observation of what is idiomatic and peculiar as distinguished from what is universal . . . make him alive to qualities of sense and form of which otherwise he could have been but vaguely conscious". That is to say, these processes aforesaid reveal to the student precisely the concepts that go to form literary judgment.

I for one am truly thankful thus to see that smoke jinn of delusion which was released at the outset imprisoned again—accidentally or otherwise—in the bottle of common sense. Skimming Greek authors in translation can never take the place of the less expeditious but more gainful process of thumbing a few masterpieces in the original. To be sure, courses in the History of Greek Literature for which a knowledge of the Greek language is not a prerequisite are not unknown nowadays in institutions of learning. But as a matter of fact these courses have been called into being by a certain lamentable tendency in higher education that is now pedagogical history. They are confessions of weakness, bids for student elections, mere sops to Cerberi. They may work positive harm unless it be clearly understood that such work can be legitimately indulged in only as a partial succedaneum, not as an equivalent in which students who have no souls above coupling-pins or mortuary statistics may flatter themselves that they are mastering Greek literature as a parergon. In fine, let us not deceive ourselves or John Doe either into supposing that if a divorce occurs in the House of Classics, Greek can keep up appearances on any such alimony as Dr. Ball fixes.

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY

DUANE REED STUART

LATIN VERSUS THE CLASSICS

(Concluded)

Exercise in translation from any language, naturally, has more or less of the same utility. It is a pedagogical commonplace. Certainly no other performance can so make the student "weigh every word" and while dealing with great men's ideas feel every detail of the expression. The constant recasting of the thought, the discrimination of synonyms, the observation of what is idiomatic and peculiar as distinguished from what is universal in modes of speech, make him alive to qualities of sense and form of which otherwise he could have been but vaguely conscious.

Little need be said of the claim that secondary-school pupils at any rate could get all necessary

linguistic drill from the analysis of literature in their mother tongue. Even if it were true it would be open to at least one grave objection. When the masterpieces of English literature are made a *corpus vile* for linguistic dissection, they may come in for a share of the dislike that occasionally falls to the dead languages. Now it does not matter supremely if an occasional pupil go through life with the impression that Caesar's Gallic War is a book chiefly intended to serve for a tiresome grammatical drill, or that an ode of Horace is a Chinese puzzle. This is regrettable and unnecessary, but in life as a whole it is not so large an affair. But if he were to get this sort of notion about things written in his native tongue, he might spoil his capacity for a love of letters forever. Vivisection in language may be as reprehensible as any other kind.

And the recasting of the thought in translation is much more radical in the case of the Latin than in that of any of the usual modern languages. A vigorous French advocate of 'modern' education urges that these should supplant the Latin in school because, being more like the pupils' vernacular, they are easier. "Easily," he says, "one passes from the French to the English, the German, the Italian. One can almost lay the translation like a tracing over the text". That of course is just why they will not do for the student what the Latin does. Nor will the Greek, which from its loose sequence of clauses so much more resembles the modern languages. The fairly complete inflection of the Latin, its substantial freedom at the same time from such redundancies of inflection as the Greek middle voice and dual number—logical superfluities, however convenient to literary art—and the periodic sentence-structure which makes the reader keep the clues of relation precisely in mind to the end, all give the Latin a particular availability for its educational function. The limitations of the language, its inadequacy for technical expression, were lamented by Romans themselves; the physician Celsus, for instance, speaks of the superiority of the Greek vocabulary for the uses of his science; but for us this relative poverty of the Latin is only another point in its favor. The simple physical fact that the Latin lexicon is a smaller volume than the Greek means that there are not in it so many mere words to memorize, special words, duplicate or synonymous words too, which in Greek the different dialects so copiously supplied. In a living language these multiplicities are sources of power, but in one which serves for formal types they become distracting *impedimenta*. It is one thing joyfully to master the idioms of a living speech in using it among those who use it, and quite another to find the same species of peculiarities as petrified distortions in a language half the value of which is